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February 4, 2014

Joint Select Committee on Pensions  
Montana Senate  
P.O. Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Joint Select Committee on Pensions:

Please accept this letter in lieu of face-to-face testimony before this committee. Please recommend passage of Representative McChesney's HB 253 to increase employer contributions to the University System's retirement program.

Since 1981 I have been the Program Director of Respiratory Care at Great Falls College MSU (GFCMSU). I started the program, teach in it and am responsible for its accreditation. Performance of the its graduates on the National Board examinations consistently places it in the top ten percent of all Respiratory Therapist programs nationwide. I have devoted 32 years of my career to GFCMSU and its Respiratory Therapist Program.

When the TIAA-CREF retirement option was implemented, I chose to change my retirement from the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to the Optional Retirement Plan. In retrospect, that is the biggest financial mistake of my career. If I were to retire at the end of this school year, I would receive approximately \$1250 and a month from TIAA-CREF. Had I stayed in TRS I would receive approximately \$3520 and a month from TRS. \$1250 a month is not a reasonable retirement for a 32 year college teaching career.

Passage of this bill will not make a major improvement in my retirement, but for the sake of young college professors and those considering a career teaching in the Montana University System, please recommend a Do Pass on HB 253. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leonard Bates

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were absent from the meeting.